He Made His Wife His Partner

By HENRY IRVING DODGE

Mrs. Bertha Bidwell

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HE MADE HIS WIFE HIS PARTNER

Books by

HENRY IRVING DODGE

HE MADE HIS WIFE HIS PARTNER
THE YELLOW DOG
SKINNER'S BIG IDEA

HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK
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FOR A MOMENT JENNIE AND I LOOKED INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES KNOWINGLY, THEN SHE SAID: "YOU'RE RIGHT, DON"

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BY

HENRY IRVING DODGE

Author of "THE YELLOW DOG" ETC.

Illustrated by

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HE MADE HIS WIFE HIS PARTNER

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ILLUSTRATIONS

For a Moment Jennie and I Looked into Each Other's Eyes Knowingly, then She Said: "You're Right, Don" . . . . . *Frontispiece*

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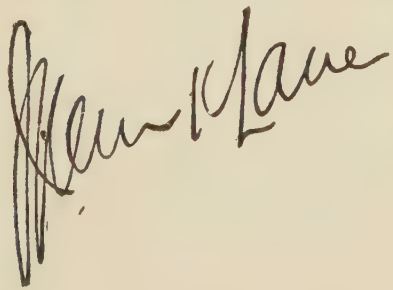
FOREWORD

BY

Hon. Franklin K. Lane

The Secretary of the Interior

The purpose of this little book is to direct the attention of farmers, and would-be farmers, to the most important factor in farm life—the woman's side of it. The writer has suggested convincingly how a woman can use her wits and by so doing promote the interest of the farm directly, by promoting her own happiness. As farming becomes more and more of a business, the cleverness and tact of the farmer's wife come more and more into demand, and the writer of this book has shown how those qualities in the woman have led directly to the success of the man and family.



HE MADE HIS WIFE HIS PARTNER

CHAPTER I

NO boy ever had a stronger love for the soil than I had. I was a natural-born farmer. Looking back from my present farming success, I can see it was an instinct with me. I could smell the possibilities of things in the earth. I could put my ear to the ground and almost hear them grow. I loved the freedom of it all. For, though I was a slave to the hardest kind of task-master—my father—still in a sense I was free.

I didn't have to stand at a lathe with the constant sense of the foreman's eye on me, or measure ribbon with a floorwalker watching me, or sit at a desk, subject to the tap of the boss's bell. When I was behind the

plow I was free. When I was hunting the cows in the meadow at milking-time, with Shep at my side, I was free. I was willing to take scolding, or abuse, even, at the end of the day if I had only had those hours of freedom by myself with the beasts of the field for company. For I loved them all.

There was no temptation for me to leave the farm. To another person the existence there might have been insufferably drab. Other boys of the neighborhood restrained their impulses to the breaking-point and then "flew the coop," some to sea, others to work on the railroad, and a few to join the circus. My brothers all left that way. But I stayed on.

My father was an utterly unreasonable man, an Old-Country man, who had homesteaded 160 acres. Like most foreign-born, he was a hard taskmaster. No black slaves were ever driven harder than father drove us four boys. Mother realized we had a hard time and it nearly broke her heart. But what could she do? None of us had much schooling, and if it hadn't been for mother I don't think we should have got any.

I never had either a dollar or a holiday. But that wasn't the worst of it. It was father's utter lack of appreciation of my

efforts that discouraged me most. Nothing could please him. For instance, he'd complain that it took me too long to hitch up the horses. And when I'd remind him that the harnesses were old and needed mending, he'd fly into a rage and vow it was my fault they were broken. Ridiculous!

The break came about in this way: Fourth of July was on Monday. There was a big celebration in a neighboring town and I wanted to be there. I knew it was no use asking father's permission to go. But I plowed corn all day Sunday to make up for the time I was going to steal the following day.

I had the time of my life at that celebration. But on the morning of the 5th father asked me to go to the barn with him. Judge of my surprise when he closed the barn door and locked it and took down the buggy-whip. Then, turning to me, he said:

"Young man, you think you can get up and go whenever you take it into your fool head to do so. But I'm master here. I'm going to thrash you within an inch of your life, and hereafter you'll stay at home and attend to your work."

For a moment I saw everything red. There was murder in my heart. But I remembered

he was my father and restrained myself. I have never ceased to be thankful for that.

I didn't have to take a licking. Father saw a look in my eyes that stayed his hand. But he said some very harsh things. Thus was a boy who dearly loved farming driven from the farm. It's the case with only too many of our boys.

I knew it was no use seeking work on another farm, for that was in the early 'nineties, when the markets of the world were so glutted with food that wheat was selling for less than fifty cents a bushel, and the farmers of Iowa and Illinois were actually using corn for fuel. Farmhands were glad to work for fifty cents a day and board themselves, and even at that it was difficult to get work. Nor did the sea, the railroad, or the circus hold any charm. The city, much as I had always disliked it, was my goal.

I had practically no money when I struck the great place of brick and mortar, paved streets, bustle, clang, and strange faces. Nor had I any definite purpose, except that I was resolved to get a job. It must have been my natural bent for mechanics that directed my footsteps to the great manufacturing plant of Green & Williams; where so many were em-

ployed there would be a better chance of finding a niche for myself.

I entered the office boldly. "I want to see the boss," said I to the young man at an outside desk.

"The manager, you mean?"

"The one who has the whole say."

At this a gentleman in a silk hat, who had been eying me rather amusedly, asked, "Do you want to get a job?"

"Are you the boss?" I asked.

He laughed. "I'm Mr. Green," said he.

Then I realized that this was the head of the concern.

"Yes," said I, "I want a job."

"What do you want to learn—the sales end or the mechanical?"

"Mechanical," said I. "I've a leaning that way."

With that he turned abruptly to the young man. "Ask Mr. Graves to come into my office." Mr. Graves, it appeared, was chief draftsman.

"Graves," said Mr. Green, a few minutes later, "here's a boy who thinks he has a bent for mechanics. Give him a chance. See what there is in him." Then, turning to me: "My boy, if you make good there's a future here.

If you don't—" With a gesture he waved us out of the room.

It was the third morning of my work in the drafting-room—they had put me at some tracing—that I first met Her—Her with a capital H. Jennie was Mr. Green's stenographer. She came into our room with a message to the chief draftsman. As she passed close to my table she gave me a smile and a look from her great brown eyes, and I could feel the blood mount from my heels to the roots of my hair and tingle all the way up my backbone.

Instantly I had it bad. I'd never seen such a creature, much less had one noticed me. I'd known other girls, some of them pretty, but they didn't know how to dress or fix their hair like Jennie. And she had a way of smiling and looking at you in—well, a way that was all her own. You see, I was a greenhorn in such matters. And I was full of pent-up enthusiasm.

All day long I listened for the click of the knob of Mr. Green's office. But Jennie didn't appear again until late in the afternoon. Then, on her way back from her message to Mr. Graves, she stopped at my table and said very quietly and with a frankness that amazed me: "Don't brush your hair that way. You've got

too good a forehead to cover it up. Brush it back smartly, like Mr. Stevens over there." Then, with a critical glance at my work, she added:

"Mr. Graves says you're making good. And the boss is pleased."

Think of it! I'd have kissed the hem of her garment.

So well did I apply myself, owing to the stimulus of Jennie's words, that it was not long before I was given little jobs of original work to lay out.

Jennie did not speak to me again for three days. Then, quite as abruptly and quite as frankly, and in her wonderful, sweet, low tones, she said, "How far did you ever get in mathematics?"

I blushed hotly. "Not quite through the arithmetic."

"Don't you want to get higher?"

My passion for education spoke out: "You bet your boots I do. But how?"

"Night school."

And night school it was.

I fairly devoured algebra and geometry and trigonometry, not only because I loved them, but because I was going to show Jennie that I wasn't any boob. In six months I was a full-

fledged draftsman with a considerable knowledge of the shop and its methods.

I confess that I didn't scheme half so much to get an education or to advance myself as I did to get a chance to see Jennie. At times Mr. Graves would send me with a message to Mr. Green. And once the senior partner questioned me as to certain things, and I noted the pride Jennie took in my answers. I tell you, Mr. Green had nothing on me just then, even if he was a senior partner.

I didn't dare to ask Jennie to let me call on her. But I used to hang round the exit of the place at quitting time just to see her pass by.

One day a heavy shower gave me a long-coveted chance for a few words with her while I escorted her under my umbrella to the street door of her boarding-house. As she said good night she sighed: "This rain. I'm afraid it's going to be a very lonely, dreary evening for me."

My heart was in my throat. The invitation was as plain as day. It was on the tip of my tongue to say, "Let me come round and talk with you," but, instead, I faltered, "I'm afraid it's going to be a lonely evening for me, too"—and let her do the rest.

Jennie laughed. "You're nothing but a

baby," she said. "Come and spend the evening with me."

I was surely self-conscious that evening—at the start. But Jennie was a finesser. "Tell me," she said, trying to put me at my ease, "what have you learned in our shop? What good has it done you to come to the city, anyway?"

"Lots of things and lots of good," said I. "First place, I've observed that it does a heap for a man to get away from the farm for a spell, even if he's going to be a farmer. He gets a new perspective of farm life."

My words "even if he's going to be a farmer," interested Jennie. "Don't you like the shop?"

"I like mechanics and the solving of problems, but I want to be my own man, a free man. I've been a slave all my life. And if I stay in the shop I'll always be a slave. Yes," I went on after a pause, "I've learned a big farming lesson right here in the shop, and some day I'm going back."

"A farming lesson here?" Jennie exclaimed.

"The manufacturers of the country," said I, "have been running things on the cut-and-dry, rule-of-thumb plan, just like the farmers—no system. They're beginning to wake up and ask the why and wherefore. They're beginning to

make a serious study of cost-accounting and of shop arrangement for rapid production and maximum efficiency.

"Why can't the farmer do the same thing? He's been asleep. He's been plugging along. He's got to wake up if he wants to hold his own. Another thing, the boys have been leaving the farm for the city. There's got to be a revolution to send 'em back—a revolution in methods. I'm beginning to have a new vision of farm life," I went on, seeing that Jennie was interested in the subject. "I understand why father didn't get ahead any faster. All he thought of was work, work, work—with his hands and his back. He didn't realize there must be a science of agriculture."

"That's only a part of the secret of failure of farm life." Jennie was regarding me wisely.

"Only a part of it?" said I. "What else can there be?"

Jennie laughed. "That's a regular man's question. The woman part of it, of course. That's what I mean."

I looked at her, puzzled.

"Think it over," she said, and added, a moment later, "Think of the farmers' wives and daughters you know."

"You speak with feeling," said I.

"You can't tell me anything about it," said Jennie. "I know all about the drab existence of those women, the all-day, hopeless drudgery. And those awful evenings with the green-shaded lamp and eight-o'clock bedtime. And Sundays, all dressed up and nowhere to go—and no one to come to see you."

"You?" said I.

"I'm a farmer's daughter," said she. "I quit it when the quitting was good."

I never knew how much I loved Jennie until her words made me realize that I couldn't ask her to go to the farm with me. For the lure of the soil was ever in my heart—the memory of the wind in the trees, the smell of the spruce, the cows, the sweet, moist meadow at milking-time, and Shep.

Not long after that the sudden death of my father called me home. A fortnight later I was back at the shop to get my belongings.

That evening I called on Jennie with a very bold and definite purpose. Almost before we had been seated in her comfortable living-room, I began to rattle off the set speech that I had prepared, lest I should forget it.

"Jennie," said I, with my heart in my throat, "I'm going back to take care of mother."

I paused to note the effect of my words.

Much to my disappointment, Jennie seemed undisturbed.

"The papers have all been made out," I rattled on. "I am to have the old place after mother is through with it, on consideration that I stay with her till the end."

Still Jennie evinced no special interest.

"It doesn't amount to so very much. There are only one hundred and sixty acres, four head of horses, a few farming tools, a few cows and hogs, and—a mortgage. The buildings are not very good, but I believe the land is fairly good except that it has been cropped quite a long time. I think I can see my way clear to make good, provided things go the way I have them figured out."

Then, as a clincher, "I believe we have passed the period of cheap foods and from now on prices will be upward."

I paused, a bit out of breath. Jennie looked rather amused; but I was not at all discouraged—for I had been told that affecting the indifferent to hide their feelings was an art with women. "Jennie," I went on, "I'm in love with you. I've been in love with you from the first day I saw you. I made up my mind to tell you so. I made up my mind to ask you to marry me. But my future is the farm. I can't

get away from it. I wouldn't be a success anywhere else. And your words, 'Think about the woman part of it,' discouraged me. I've been thinking a heap about it and I've concluded that a farmer should make his wife a partner in every sense. He should let her use her wits in every way, not only to make the farm pay, but to make farm life happy. He should give her free rein with the purse, make her a 'regular feller' of a woman and not a drudge."

"That's the way you'd treat me if I were to marry you?" asked Jennie, softly.

"Jennie," I cried, "do you mean it?" I couldn't believe my ears. "Do you really mean it?"

"You foolish boy!" said she. "I've loved you so that I made up my mind I'd marry you even with the farm thrown in." She put her hand in mine. "Only one thing makes me go back to the farm, Don—that's my confidence in you. I know you'll make good."

All my life those words have been my support, my guide.

We were married the 1st of March and immediately settled on the farm. A month later mother followed father into the Great Unknown, much beloved and leaving her blessing to her

children. Jennie took hold with almost feverish energy. I found it difficult to curb her, lest she wear herself out.

As I have said, I was resolved that my first care should be to spare Jennie as much as possible. Not only that, but I would contribute to the truly feminine side of her nature. I had observed that my wife had certain feminine instincts of delicacy, privacy. Her tastes were dainty.

So I arranged that she have a room of her own which she could fix up in her own way and where she could consider herself free from intrusion. My own room was just across the hall. And, believe me, I appreciated having a room to myself, too. I'd always been herded in with one or another of my brothers, and where two or three boys, brothers, occupy a room, no matter how neat one may be, the "manly carelessness" of the others will reduce the condition of the room to a pretty low average.

Jennie appreciated my consideration.

Right here let me give a word to the wise. Don't misconstrue it. Don't think me selfish in the matter. But it sometimes pays to be selfish, especially when your selfishness proves a blessing to another person. I was in love with Jennie, deeply in love with her. And it was my

I ARRANGED THAT SHE HAVE A ROOM OF HER OWN, WHERE SHE COULD CONSIDER HERSELF FREE FROM INTRUSION

love for her that prompted me to show her every consideration.

But back of it all, try as I would to banish it, there lurked the idea that Jennie and I were linked together for life, that I would have to sit opposite her at the table for years, that I would have to look at that face for years. And I was determined that that face was going to grow lovelier. Don't think me cynical, but seams and wrinkles don't make a face grow lovelier, no matter what the poets say. It's worry that plows furrows in the face, just as it is contentment that smooths those furrows out or keeps them from coming at all.

And, by the same token, Jennie, with her dainty tastes, would have to sit opposite me at the table, would have to listen to my talk. I was going to keep clean shaven and smart and up-to-date. I was going to wear my coat at the table and do a few other things that cost nothing but a little time and trouble.

The first summer and autumn of our married life were devoted to the drudgery of farm work. But that drudgery was lightened by the fact that Jennie and I were both young and strong and very much in love.

Even the edge of our love might have been dulled by the back-breaking drudgery we were

compelled to undergo, but that Jennie kept thinking and I kept thinking and planning for the future.

I am a great believer in social life. And I had Jennie get the girls and young married women to arrange for a weekly dance that coming winter. I also prevailed upon my wife to join the choir. And I joined, too. Choir rehearsals and the dances took up two evenings a week. Sunday was well occupied. After church we generally had one of the neighbors in to dinner. And as this was my scheme, I made it my business to wash the dishes. Furthermore, I had rented a piano in Centerville.

"Let us," said Jennie, "think of farming as a business, just as we'd think of making gloves or shoes or running a department store. Above all, it's a matter of bookkeeping."

So the four evenings that we had to ourselves we devoted to planning our business, as we put it.

"Jennie," said I, one evening, "we've no money, no capital but our brains. Our business will be a case of the soil, plus the wits of the tiller."

"It's a stubborn soil, at that," said Jennie.

"To overcome it, our wits must be sharp and even more stubborn," said I.

Right here let me say I'm writing this story

to show the shortest route a man situated as we were may take to success. If he have some capital he can cut the route short by many, many weary years. He can skip the most arduous, heartbreaking rungs and begin away up on the ladder to success. It's not necessary for a man to begin his agricultural experience by shoveling manure from a cow-stable. Though experience is the best teacher, there is no reason why a man with money enough should not equip a farm in the beginning as mine was equipped at the end of twenty-five years, and get an experienced man to direct it.

There was no let-up of work till the snow began to fly. Then we stopped. There were cider and apples in the cellar and stacks of good stove-length hickory in the woodshed.

"Don," said Jennie, one evening, "plowing and sowing and harvesting are the work of spring and summer and autumn—the work of the hands. Winter is the time to use our wits, to plan."

"Right," said I. "Old Jack Frost may laugh, for he thinks he's got us tied up and helpless. But if he only knew it, he's only released our thinking processes."

So all our four free evenings were devoted to discussing and planning.

We had lots of time on our hands during that first winter. We hadn't decided definitely what we were going to do, but it was interesting to speculate. And then one evening Jennie whispered the magic words that filled me with tenderness for her. I realized that a new and wonderful responsibility in the shape of a great blessing was to come to us. And our planning for the future took on a new significance.

The winter after our first season of farming we got all our accounts together and began to analyze the year's business just the way they used to do in the shop. Our corn yield that year was forty-five bushels an acre; oats, fifty-six; wheat, eighteen.

"How are those yields?" asked Jennie.

"They're about the average for this section," said I.

"If that is the best we can do," she said, "we'll never get ahead."

"Why?"

"Figure it up for yourself. Take into account the cost of labor, interest on investment, seed, and everything else, and see where you come out. Here are the figures."

She had them all worked out as neat as you please. And she was right. We had made a

bare living and paid the interest on the mortgage. That was all.

"Jennie," said I, "we're traveling a rocky road, neither up nor down."

"But," she answered, "the rocky road leads into Progress Street, which begins at the bottom of the hill yonder." She clapped her hands gleefully. "I can see it from here."

"Great," I cried; "that's imagination. But come down to concrete facts. We're still on Rocky Road. What are we going to do about it?"

"Find a way to increase the yields. Our profits, if we ever make any, must come from larger production."

"Right. But how? I can't do any more work in preparing the soil, nor any more work taking care of the crops after they begin to grow—and we can't hire."

"The soil has been working too long without renewal," said Jennie. "It lacks some elements of plant food. We must get it analyzed and see what's the matter with it. Here are some clippings from agricultural papers and a letter from the state chemist. He tells us how to take soil samples. He will analyze them free of charge if we'll send them to him."

We did as the chemist directed and presently

got back his report, which showed that our soil was deficient in both nitrogen and phosphorus, and that some of the other elements were beginning to run out.

Soil fertility, then, was our first big problem. We studied the matter as best we could, and with the help of the agricultural experts we laid out a course for soil upbuilding that we followed to the letter. Results at first were discouraging.

Let me, while I'm on the subject of the relation of fertilization to production, go ahead of my story for a few years. We observed and jotted down on our charts the results of artificial fertilization. Certain lines on the chart indicated how the quantities of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and magnesium increased, but the crop-production chart told the real story. There wasn't much improvement during the first five years; then the curved lines of the chart began to rise. It wasn't until after the tenth year that they reached their present altitude. The last figures, plotted for the year 1915, showed an average production of ninety bushels of corn to the acre, almost one hundred bushels of oats, and thirty-one bushels of wheat—an increase of practically 100 per cent. since we began our soil-renewal scheme.

Likewise, we kept charts of labor production, of labor costs for the different crops, of power costs, and of machinery performances, all of which showed the most careful analysis of every factor of the business. These were right in line with what the manager of a successful manufacturing business would prepare for his board of directors. The chart records and studies were of wonderful value to us.

They showed which crops were the most profitable and which lost us money, and they enabled us to concentrate our efforts on the things that paid us best.

If it hadn't been for Jennie's clever analysis of the situation, I suppose we should still be grubbing away and wondering why we couldn't get ahead.

Late in the summer of our second year on the farm a little boy from the Land of Nowhere came to live with us. Jennie had made careful preparations for his coming, and I had looked forward to it with a feeling that a man experiences only once in a lifetime. We had had a pretty strenuous year in business. We'd just about broken even, in fact. But we weren't discouraged—not for an instant.

The coming of the boy, while it added responsibilities, also gave a new interest in life.

For the time being, all plans for farm work ceased. But later on, when things had assumed the normal, we began to map and plan for the future.

"Jennie," said I, one night, "I never realized as I did to-day how utterly unscientific the arrangement of our buildings is with relation to our work."

"Didn't you?" said Jennie, with a smile. "I did long ago. I guess my training at the works emphasized it. When they start efficiency methods in big factories, you know, they seek to avoid wastage of energy through unnecessary motion. Every leak is plugged."

"Father didn't know," said I, apologetically. "He built without regard to efficiency or convenience."

"That's why the buildings are so badly scattered," said Jennie. "Do you know, one day," she added, "when you were in town I checked off the distances traveled by us in doing chores, and found that we covered hundreds of needless miles every year."

"Needless?" I asked, surprised.

"We walk over some of the paths seven or eight times night and morning, making return trips and detours like a dog along a country road."

"Covering those miles means wasted units of energy—energy that might have been made into wheat, and so on into money," said I.

"And might have been avoided if the buildings had been arranged with a view to the order of their use."

"We must plan to remedy it," said I. I got my drafting-board and brought it to the table and proceeded to lay out a plan. Jennie watched me for a while, then she burst out laughing.

"What's up?" I asked, irritated, for her laugh sometimes annoyed me. The trouble was she was a darned sight smarter than I and I didn't like to admit it.

"You are putting up your house without any foundation," she chuckled.

"I don't get you," said I, puzzled, but still irritated.

"Goosie," said she—for we still called each other by baby names when we were alone together—"if you were to build a shop, you'd first determine what kind of goods you were going to sell, wouldn't you? If you were going to sell shoes, you wouldn't put up racks for vinegar-barrels, as they do in a grocery-store, or if dry-goods, you wouldn't put up hooks for hanging beef, like a butcher."

"I get you," said I. "I've missed the biggest

problem of the lot—the kind of farming we're going to do."

"I haven't," said Jennie, quietly. "I began to think of it the night you asked me to marry you. I saw something beyond being a mere corn-and-potato drudge or I wouldn't have—"

"You wouldn't have married me," I interposed, as she hesitated.

"Yes, I would. But I'd have persuaded you to stay in the shop for your own salvation."

"Let's talk it over," said I, after a pause.

CHAPTER II

FOR several nights we did talk it over, our second big problem—what kind of farming we should follow. Our discussion, which we thought very learned, involved the whole field of agricultural economics—crop analysis, climate, marketing possibilities, and a forecast of the future trend of agriculture.

"Well," said Jennie, the third evening, after dinner, when baby was tucked away, "I've reached a decision."

"What's the answer?" said I.

"We live in the corn belt, don't we?"

"But what's the answer?" I persisted.

"Hogs," said Jennie.

"I don't quite get it," said I.

"Goosie," said she, "it's the only answer for any one who lives in the corn belt—hogs."

"Man can't live by hogs alone," said I.

"How fast is Chicago going to grow?" asked Jennie, for answer. Remember, this was still in the early 'nineties.

"Pretty fast, I reckon. All the railroads are headed in there and it has a big Lake trade."

"It 'll be a big manufacturing center, too."

"Bound to be," said I. "It has the shipping facilities. The coal and iron can be brought down the Lakes by boat for little or nothing."

"And there'll be other cities here in the Middle West—big ones, too."

"St. Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati, Kansas City, and Omaha are bound to grow, and there will be a host of smaller ones."

"We're going to be in the center of a circle of big cities."

"Right," said I.

"So much for consumption," said Jennie. "Now for production. The big ranges of the West are being broken up. Some day all these people will be paying big prices for meat and milk and butter. According to the census," she went on, "we'll have a hundred million people in this country inside of the next twenty years, and two-thirds of these people have got to be fed and clothed by the other third. We will live to see big changes in our country."

"I get it," said I.

"Isn't it clear, then, that farmers can't afford to keep on raising scrubby cattle and razorback hogs and cows that don't give a lot

of milk on high-priced land?" Jennie paused. "Catch the point?"

"Hogs it is," said I. "But I repeat, man can't live by hogs alone."

"Can't, eh?" Jennie handed me a list of prices paid at a recent stock sale and I confess it took my breath away.

"But," I protested, "we don't know anything about fancy stock."

"We didn't know anything about soil renewal till the state expert taught us."

"To an old-fashioned farmer like me, a man who never liked hogs, anyway, the idea of hogs is a pretty stiff jolt."

"You ninny!" cried Jennie. "Growing pigs need milk, don't they?"

"I get you," cried I, wonderfully relieved. "That means dairy cattle, too."

"High-class dairy cattle," Jennie emphasized.

And hogs it was—hogs, hogs, hogs, practically nothing but hogs. The word "hog" took on for me a new meaning. Never again shall I call a beastly, disreputable man a hog. On the contrary, I shall call the beastly, disreputable hog —a rare specimen—a man. John I. Blair was wrong.

Some years ago John I., the great railroad-builder and banker, who was then about eighty

years old, was persuaded by the politicians to run for Governor of New Jersey. He was beaten to a frazzle. But he took his defeat philosophically.

"I've one consolation," said he, referring to the politicians who had beset him. "And it reminds me of the story of the man in the early days who drove a herd of hogs to Chicago. When he got there he heard that the price of pork was higher in St. Louis. So he drove his hogs to St. Louis. When he got there he found that the price of pork had gone up in Chicago. 'I've lost money,' said he, 'but I've had the society of the hogs.'

"That's my case," said John I. "I've spent a hundred thousand dollars, but I've had the society of the hogs."

The politician has the advantage of the hog in this respect: No hog can be a politician.

Jennie again was right, as I shall show by forecasting a bit. By the time we had been on the place ten years we were getting well established in pure-bred hogs and dairy cattle. We showed at all the local fairs and had some little local reputation. We began to get good prices, too. The first time I sold a hog for $100 it seemed to me almost like highway robbery to take the money. But I've sold many a porker since for $500 to $800.

Once we decided the kind of farming we should follow, it was easy enough, with the suggestions we got from the agricultural expert, to figure out what buildings we needed. But when it came to the matter of grouping them correctly we had to depend upon ourselves. Let me say right here that we followed our original plans in building almost exactly as we went along from year to year. When we put up a permanent building we located it according to the sketch. The result was we developed a very efficient arrangement of buildings through a period of fifteen years.

Having got the houses mapped out and construction started, it was necessary to get the hogs. This we did in the usual way. There was nothing romantic about it. We simply bought sows with litters and a breed boar, mostly purebreds. A characteristic of the hog is that it isn't long in this world before it begins to contemplate going to housekeeping on its own hook. The result was, barring accidents, our herd of pigs increased almost in geometrical ratio.

We were getting along swimmingly, happy as larks at the prosperity that had come to our door, when, like a bolt from the blue, hog cholera swept that section. If ever two persons strug-

gled to save their property, Jennie and I struggled to save those hogs from the pestilence. But—well, when the thing was past we took stock and found that we had lost fifty of our herd of sixty, including all our pure-breds. The blow was dumfounding in its suddenness, demoralizing in its effect. But it didn't squelch us. We put into practice our recipe for the blues: "When you're blue look into the bright future. Borrow some of its sunshine to dispel present gloom."

"To make it a little easier," said Jennie, after our last pure-bred hog had died, "I'm going to read to you from the Book of Job."

We were pretty young, I thought, to start reading Job. But I confess his troubles did modify ours quite considerably.

"Well," said I, when Jennie had finished reading, "I guess if Job could stand it we can." So we set our teeth grimly and kept on planning for the future. That was the third year.

Neighbor Wicks, the most notorious optimist of that section, observed, "Yea, the Lord tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb."

His words were prophetic. For, a few months later, we were blessed with another child—a fine girl. The joy of her coming banished all the gloom. And now I discovered that woman's

capacity for work increases beyond a man's. To illustrate: Jennie had been doing her share of the work, working up to the limit, I thought. But a short time after our first-born arrived she was doing easily as much work in farm matters as she'd been doing before and, in addition, taking care of the baby and planning for the future. With the new baby Jennie again increased her capacity for work. And later on, as other little ones arrived, she found room for them all in her heart and in her head without in any way dislodging me or the farm.

Even the advent of our little girl was hardly sufficient to sustain us against the shock of another blow we were about to receive. We were pulling ourselves together in great shape. Nothing but the dim echoes of hog cholera from remote points reminded us of the disaster we had suffered the year before. The harvest was a plentiful one, thanks to nature and to the development of our new fertility scheme. We had gathered our hay and grain and stored it in our biggest barn, which, though old, was a whale of a structure in very good condition.

I don't know how it happened. Very likely a tramp did it, for the Middle West at that time was infested with human rodents. But one night a red glow in my room awakened me.

My first thought, I am glad to say, was of the cattle. It was a miracle how I did it, but I saved them, every one, although I almost lost my own life in doing it. When the neighbors arrived they found me unconscious in the field not far from the burning barn.

The Book of Job didn't sustain me this time. Not that I cursed or anything like that, but I was all in.

"You ridiculous boy," said Jennie, "to let an accident—a mere accident—discourage you. If the soil had persistently refused to respond to the fertilizer, or if you'd been incapacitated physically, there might be some excuse. But everything's been coming our way."

"Yes," I grouched. "Hog cholera came our way, all right, and hobos came our way. I've a mind to pull up stakes and go back to town, where men have something to say about shaping their own destiny and don't leave it to the fickleness of nature."

Jennie proved resourceful, as usual. She didn't argue. She simply said: "I've been planning a trip to Niagara Falls for some time. Let's take it now. Tom Brennan 'll look after the stock for us."

"This is a fine time to spend money," I retorted, with as near a sneer as was possible

to my nature, for I'm not the cantankerous type.

"You'll find it the biggest investment you ever made," said Jennie.

I never knew Niagara had such an inspirational influence. Jennie and I sat and looked at the thunderous, magnificent scene. The Falls grew bigger and bigger and I and my affairs grew smaller and smaller. A great calm came to me. It was impossible to be impatient or irritated in the presence of such a scene. This condition was succeeded by a stimulation.

"Well," said I, after a while, "I guess my affairs don't amount to such an awful lot in this universe. This thing seems to be pretty big and pretty permanent. Let's go back and start a new shack for the cattle for winter."

Niagara had washed away all the soreness of my troubles. It had, metaphorically, grabbed me by the back of the neck and jerked me to my feet.

We went back and put our noses to the grindstone again after two bad years in succession, not a cent left, and a mortgage still on the place.

A thing that helped to give me a stiff upper lip was the discovery that I amounted to something personally. Rather timidly I went to see

John R. Slocum, of the Centerville First National. I began in an apologetic way. Borrowing money was not an art with me as it is with some men. And, what's more, I'd never seen Slocum before.

But the bank president cut me short with, "How much do you want?"

"Enough to put up new buildings," I said, "and restock." I told him what I thought would do.

"You can have that, and more, too," said he.

"But the old place isn't worth any more," said I.

"We country bankers don't loan money on ground; we loan it on character," said he. "You and your wife are worth a heap, MacKenzie," he went on. "No man and woman could put up the fight that you two did against hog cholera and other things that I've heard about and pull through, without having a whole lot of spirit. And a man that's got spirit 'll pay his debts."

I didn't tell him how near I'd been to quitting. But if spirit was good collateral, Jennie had enough to guarantee him against loss.

We put up a rough shell of a barn that fall. Almost immediately I was given an object-lesson in the wisdom of Job for refusing to get

"WE COUNTRY BANKERS DON'T LOAN MONEY ON GROUND; WE LOAN IT ON CHARACTER. YOU AND YOUR WIFE ARE WORTH A HEAP"

mad at petty trifles, for our soil-improvement scheme began to show results. The next year we had very good crops.

"Jennie," said I, one evening—this was at the end of the sixth year—as we were gloating over the rising crop lines on the charts, "it's all due to you."

"I'm going to spring something," said Jennie. That was always her way of warning me of a new plunge. I was always for retrenching; Jennie was always for progressing. If I'd been left to myself I might have fallen back into the old ways of my father, for a man has no social ambitions, you know, to keep him spurred up. But Jennie had gone back on the farm for my sake and she was determined that the farm and I should both go ahead for her sake. I was the plodder and Jennie was the driving force—a good team of roadsters—but she always kept a little way in the lead.

"Shoot," said I, grimly, resolved to oppose any radical suggestion she might make and knowing full well that I should give in. "Shoot."

"Don," said she, "our charts have proved to me that anything less than two hundred acres is an uneconomical unit for the kind of farming we're engaged in."

"Yes," said I, braced for the shock I knew was coming.

"Our charts also show that any appreciable increase above two hundred and sixty acres requires so much more labor and equipment that there won't be much profit unless we increase our holdings to more than four hundred acres."

"I get you," said I. Then, "That means more work for the undertaker."

"It means that we've reached Progress Street," said Jennie, "and we're going to live on it."

So we bought another hundred acres and proved Jennie to be correct. Years afterward the government experts reached the same conclusion.

We found Progress Street a street of absorbing interest. Living on it was easier and infinitely more interesting than living on Rocky Road. Jennie justified the move almost at the start by bringing forth twins—100 per cent. advance on any previous achievement. It made me tremble to think what might happen if we attempted to move to Comfort Street, two blocks beyond.

Jennie's words, "We've reached Progress Street and we're going to live on it," haunted

me. I kept turning them over in my mind. I don't want to assume the rôle of saint, but I'd found great comfort, great inspiration, in working for Jennie and the kids. Mentally and morally, my attitude was the result of first and last trying to be fair. I had persuaded Jennie to come back to farm life. The children had taken it up through no choice of their own. I was thrifty, thanks to the Scotch there was in me, I suppose, but never at the expense of my wife and children. No one can lay that up against me at the Great Accounting. We took care that our children were well groomed—as well groomed, at least, as we were trying to make the farm and our live stock, which is saying much.

So I turned Jennie's words over and over, and after dinner on the day we'd made our last payment on the hundred acres I said to her: "Now that we've moved onto Progress Street, Jennie, we're going to live on it as befits the residents thereof."

"What's in your mind, Don?" she asked, after a pause.

"You," said I.

"What's the matter with me?"

"Nothing," said I; "but there soon will be if I let you go on drudging in that kitchen.

You're a young woman, Jennie, and you're very pretty, and as we are going to live together some years longer I'd like to keep you that way. You've been giving to me and the children all these years, and you've taken it out of yourself to do it."

"But, Don, think how giving to you and the children has added to my happiness!"

"That's a subtle argument," said I; "but it doesn't go down. We've been living on Progress Street under false colors, I say."

Jennie opened her eyes wide.

"We haven't progressed as we should, I mean."

"Why, Don," cried Jennie, "I'd like to know? We've paid off the old mortgage; we've paid for the hundred acres; we've rebuilt the barns; we've bought the first manure-spreader sold in this county; we've put up the first silo; we've purchased the first corn-harvester; and we've been the first to equip our binders with binder-engines—to say nothing of the twins." She laughed. "Doesn't that entitle us to live on Progress Street?"

"Not yet."

"Not yet? And after we did all that, we remodeled the house a good bit. We put in new floors; we put in running water from

the overhead tank at the windmill. Isn't that enough?"

"The trouble is, Jennie, we began at the wrong end. We started at the barn when we should have started at the house. And even when we remodeled the house we began at the wrong end. We should have begun at the kitchen. We should have saved you. You're the biggest factor in this outfit. We depend upon you to keep going."

I spoke that way because I knew it was the only way to persuade Jennie, make her think it was for my sake and the kiddies' and the farm's sake.

Jennie lifted her hands as if in protest.

"Be quiet," said I. "I've made up my mind and no talk of yours will change it. See here; I've some plans—kitchen-efficiency plans." For I was an efficiency crank. I applied it to everything. Even the woman's domain was not sacred from me.

"But, Don, how about the new power-plant we must get? We can't run the place with only a gasolene-engine and a windmill."

"Neither can we run it without you."

"But I can wait."

"Not another day," said I, with grim resolution.

"Don, I won't let you."

Then I played my ace: "The children need it and I need it, Jennie. It's Comfort Street for ours."

And Comfort Street it was.

I showed Jennie the plans. She looked at me for a moment. "Don, now I know. You were working on these when you used to go into your room and pretend you were tired, and lock the door so the children wouldn't come in."

There was no use in denying it.

"Let's go over them," I said.

Jennie raised a warning finger. "But first, what's it going to cost?"

"Not much, and the returns will be enormous —for me and the children," I added quickly, to disarm her.

I didn't give Jennie the lump sum, but let the expense reveal itself bit by bit as we examined the different items of the plan. Let me give you the results as I saw them the day after we had moved onto Comfort Street.

To begin with, I had reckoned there was no use in Jennie's taking so many steps in the kitchen, crisscross and back and forth for the most trifling things. If she chanced to be at the table and wanted salt or pepper or the

bread-knife, it took four or five paces to get it. For ours was one of those old-fashioned, enormous kitchens. I rehearsed the whole operation as I'd seen Jennie go through it one evening when the youngsters had gone to bed, and figured out that she walked hundreds of unnecessary miles.

I made it a point to bring all the necessary cupboards and shelves and drawers near together, so that Jennie could stand almost in one spot and reach every required thing. I must have reduced her leg effort five times, I reckoned. Then I installed a small power unit, motor and shaft, and in a cupboard close by put a bread-mixer, an ice-cream freezer, a knife-sharpener, a vegetable-slicer, a coffee-grinder, and other devices, all driven by the little motor by means of belt and pulleys.

Jennie called it her mechanical *chef*. "I've only to touch a button," said she, "and it does the rest."

When I thought of the cost of those spirit- and body-saving devices, I felt an awful fool for not getting them long before. The power unit cost me only $40, and the other electrical things, the toaster, the coffee-percolator, and the frying-pan, $30 more. Think of buying exemption for Jennie from all that drudgery for $70!

Then I placed a hood over the stove to carry away odors. Jennie surely appreciated that.

Now that I had come to realize what these things meant to Jennie, I determined not to play a piker's game, not to stop at any seventy-dollar kitchen outfit. I would go the limit of household conveniences.

Cooking is hard work, but it's interesting. One has to use one's wits at it. That's the only thing that relieves the drudgery.

The last of the body-racking, soul-destroying instruments devised by the devil were the old-fashioned tub and washboard. Small wonder they used to call wash-day "blue Monday." Think of a woman going through that drudgery once a week! And when she wasn't going through it, she was dreading it.

"By jingo!" said I, "that's the next thing I'll fix for Jennie, and right away."

So I went into retirement again, as Jennie called it, and mapped out the laundry outfit. Jennie guessed what I was about and tried to stop me, for she was a thrifty soul. But I had the bit in my teeth and couldn't be halted. It was to be a regular riot in household conveniences.

One thing I had observed: The washing

women always had to go out from a hot tub and hang up clothes, often in a searching wind. I put an end to that in my house. Just follow me in imagination: The laundry is right next to the kitchen. See that cabinet over there with the electric fan on one end? That's our clothes-drier. See that big steam coil along one side and those racks to hang the clothes on? The furnace in the basement furnishes the steam and the fan keeps the air circulating through the wet clothes. It cost pretty close to $100, but it's worth a thousand.

Remember, that was some years ago. I don't know what those things would cost to-day.

See that electric washing-machine? It's a dandy. It cost $115. And the electric ironing-machine yonder cost $163, and was cheap at the price. That little electric flatiron cost only $5, and it's wonderful the time and energy it saves, to say nothing of fuel. You don't have to keep picking up new irons from the stove every few minutes and spitting on 'em to see if they're hot enough.

Those stationary tubs cost only $35. And all you've got to do is to pull the plug and let the water run out. You don't have to break your back lugging a big tub out to a runway, and give your legs and feet a bath of soapy, hot water

every time you do it. Talk about investment! You can save $25 in rheumatism medicine in one winter. And look what I've got: Three faucets over each tub—cold soft water, cold hard water, and hot soft water. Can you beat it?

You can't see the pressure tanks for the hard and soft water, for they're located in the basement under the back porch. And the power to run all this is down in the cellar, not far from the vegetable-room and the fruit-room. It's an old thresher boiler, a lot bigger and a lot cheaper than a regular boiler, and it furnishes steam for the house, the laundry, and the shop outside. It's a complete little plant, and I am proud of it.

The returns I got from my household-efficiency efforts were wonderful. First and foremost, they gave Jennie a new lease of life. She grew younger day by day. Her step was more elastic. The roses came back to her cheeks. Her hair was glossier than ever, it seemed, and I noticed that she had done it in a new kind of topknot.

"Jennie," said I, triumphantly, "look what this has done for you."

"That's a man's way of looking at it, you great big goose." Then as she snuggled up, the

way she used to do when we were first married: "It isn't those things at all. It is the love they express that did it."

"Jennie," said I, some months later, "I'm not satisfied with Comfort Street any longer."

Jennie's face showed alarm. "Don, if you move again, I—"

"I've made up my mind. We're going to move to Civilization Avenue."

"How much?" Jennie gasped.

"Look here, Jennie," said I. "You know that every move we've made has been highly advantageous. You know that every investment has paid big dividends, don't you? Well—"

So I put in a complete plumbing system, with bath-room, laundry, and kitchen connections. I got it much lower then, for labor was cheaper. It 'd cost $450 to-day. Also, I put in my own sewage-disposal plant. It's of the septic-tank type and has never given us any particular trouble during the eight years we've had it. The fittings for this cost $60, and in addition there were lumber for the forms, and concrete, tile, and a lot of excavating. You couldn't duplicate the system to-day for less than $300.

I planned to put in one of those stationary vacuum cleaners, but they wanted $300 for

that. Even so, I might have done it if Jennie hadn't come to the rescue. "We can get two small portable machines, one for up-stairs and one for down," said she; "seventy dollars for both."

And that's what we did. And my, didn't they take a lot of the drudgery out of housework!

"Don," said Jennie, one evening when the youngsters—for we always called 'em youngsters—had gone to a party at Neighbor Henderson's, "if we had the parlor floors done over and got some nice rugs and a few fine pictures, would that mean that we'd have to move from Civilization Avenue to Luxury Boulevard?"

"Why, no!" I laughed.

"I'm so glad," said she. "I love it here." Then, after a pause: "In my heart, Don, I've changed the name of Civilization Avenue. I didn't tell you about it, because I knew that it squared so well with your advanced ideas."

"And what do you call it now?" said I.

There was a suggestion of moisture in her eyes as she answered, "I call it Happiness Road."

"That's a beautiful name," said I. "It suggests crimson ramblers and violets and mosses. But tell me, why are you afraid of Luxury Boulevard? It's higher up the hill, remember."

Jennie shook her head. "No, it isn't," she said, quickly. "Happiness Road is on top of the hill. Luxury Boulevard is on the other side —it leads downward. It's a dangerous place for children."

CHAPTER III

THE way my father treated us boys was a powerful lesson to me. There were four strapping, intelligent youths, natural sons of the soil, driven from the farm to enter callings they were little qualified to pursue, and in which three of them had never made successes. My three boys were stout, intelligent lads. I made up my mind that if they should leave the farm their act would be wholly voluntary.

Jennie and I had put our heads together shortly after the youngsters began to arrive—in considerable numbers—and had decided upon a course of treatment of them. I made up my mind not to fall into the error of American parents who, themselves in their youth having suffered extreme restraint and intolerance, let their children go the limit in the opposite direction. I was going to see to it, however, that my youngsters had proper freedom of thought and action.

I had observed that Dick and Harry, the twins, had different bents. Harry was a natural-

born machinist, while Dick loved all living creatures. John, the eldest boy, had the gift of buying and selling.

"Jennie," said I, when John was a young man and the twins were not far behind—"Jennie, I don't see why we shouldn't mobilize these talents right here. We must keep the boys on the farm, if we can. It will be better for them, better for us."

For a moment Jennie and I looked into each other's eyes knowingly, then she said: "You're right, Don. I, too, have noticed the signs of growing unrest in the boys. We must head it off—so long as it's for their good."

"It resolves itself into this," said I. "We must capitalize the wits, experience, and character of our children as well as their muscle."

"Quite right," said Jennie.

Jennie and I discussed the matter further and the next evening I called a family conference. "Boys," said I, "your mother and I have decided to organize this farm along industrial lines, just like any manufacturing proposition. To begin with, John is going to do the buying and the selling. That suits you, doesn't it, John?"

"Why, yes, sir," said John, "quite."

I imagine it brought to his mind thoughts of

an occasional visit to town and mixing with smart people. I had noticed John had ambitions that way.

"That will involve, John," said I, "the purchase of all supplies for the farm—all but the house—and the selling of the products of every description. Is that right, mother?" I asked, turning to Jennie. She nodded affirmatively.

"Now," said I, "I am going to have Dick look after all the live stock of every description, from chicks to porkers. And Harry is to have charge of the farm machinery of every description, from the garden rake to the threshing-machine. Even the motor in the kitchen and the laundry-machine will come under his supervision."

Harry and Dick took a long breath in chorus and their chests expanded at the idea of their new importance.

"You boys are to employ such outside help as you may think necessary in your departments. You are to have full say. You are well-trained lads, you've experience, you've observed what I have done to make the farm productive. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes, sir," cried Dick and Harry.

"As for me," I observed, "I shall look after the sowing and harvesting of the crops."

"But, father," said Margaret, "what about me?"

"I've an inside tip," said I, with an air of mystery that goes with such words. I waited until they were all sufficiently interested, then went on, "Your mother's going to take care of that part of the arrangement."

"Margaret's going to look after the house," said Jennie, who never liked to keep any one in suspense and was forever spoiling my little theatrical effects.

"The next matter," said I, after a pause, "is compensation. It must be equitable. Each must feel that he is being fairly treated. So I am going to make a stock company of this farm. I shall divide it into two hundred shares. One hundred shares will be retained by your mother and me, and you children will have twenty-five shares each. Whatever dividends are earned by our combined efforts will be paid on that basis. Have you any suggestions, boys?"

"Of course we'll be directed by you, father," said John.

"I don't want you to feel that way. To be sure, when there's any important matter to decide, like a big purchase or sale of stock or crops or any innovation in the mechanical end of it, you'll find me at the old stand. But I want

each of you to look after the details of his department without consulting me. We'll have a weekly conference at which we will freely discuss the work of each part and its relation to the whole outfit.

"One thing I want to impress upon you boys," said I, "is that there will come a time when there will be a shortage of farm labor. We must not be caught napping. So bend your efforts in the direction of machinery. Reduce the requirement for human labor to a minimum. Catch the point, Harry?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "And also, I reckon that in addition to making the man plus the machine immensely more efficient, we'll make him better satisfied. He'll take a more intelligent interest in his work, and if there should be a labor shortage, what farm-hands there are will come to us rather than go to other farms where they still follow old-fashioned methods."

"Just as women have been coming to us ever since the new kitchen devices were installed," added Margaret, "and offering to work for less money than they could have got elsewhere at that."

We formally put our co-operative scheme into execution at once, although, as a matter of fact, it had been in operation for some time. For I

had been testing the boys out and observing them in their various departments without their knowing it.

There was no clashing of the departments. The twins worked together harmoniously, as they always had done. John, as the buyer and seller, was away much of the time and had a chance to observe what was going on in the agricultural world about us, and reported details at our weekly conferences.

One day the twins came to me together—they'd evidently been talking it over. "We don't think it's quite just, father," said Harry, "that John, who spends a good deal of his time dressed up and traveling about, should get as much as we, who do the laborious part of it."

I affected surprise, although I knew it was coming and was waiting for it. "Look here, boys," said I, "I've observed John, and he's proved himself to be a very shrewd buyer and seller. It is he who makes your end of it pay. Suppose he should come to me and say: 'I'm the commercial end of this. I ought to get more money than Harry or Dick.' I would say to him: 'John, it is Dick's good management of the live stock that enables you to deliver the goods. It is that that makes the reputation for the farm. That's why people buy from us.' I

would also say to him: 'John, it is Harry's splendid efficiency with the mechanical end of the outfit that enables us to produce good crops to feed the live stock that you have to market.' Do you catch on, boys?"

"I do," said Dick.

"And we're heartily ashamed, father, that we made any complaint," said Harry.

"Enough said," said I. "It shall go no farther."

That was the only suggestion of insurrection that ever occurred in our little industrial establishment.

What's the result of my little experiment? The boys are contented. They run their departments like clockwork. They have their own cash to do with as they please, no questions asked. They get up and go to bed when they like. And they have unlimited use of horses and machines with which to go sparking whenever the fancy takes them, and which I have observed of late is of increasing frequency. But that's their affair.

The incident of the little "kick" made by Harry and Dick would have been forgotten had it not developed that John, too, was beginning to feel his oats. He began—and I think he was using it as a lead-up to the claim that he was

going to make—by dilating upon the difficulties he experienced in making certain negotiations. Also we were not allowed to forget it whenever he made a particularly advantageous sale. His branch of the work allowed him a larger field for boasting than did those of the other boys, a fact which caused them some envy, I could see. I, blundering fellow that I was, took John's boasting as simply the ebullitions of youth, but I noticed that Jennie was regarding him shrewdly.

"He's not given to boasting," she said, with her brows knitted. "I wonder what's back of it."

"Nonsense!" said I. "He's only a kid. He has new authority. They all brag when they get like that."

"There's a method to it," said she. "He's a shrewd boy."

"Well," said I, "you may be wiser than I am. You generally are. But"—and here I attempted to be ironical, something at which I customarily failed dismally—"when this mysterious purpose of his becomes obvious to your superior discernment, please send me a wire."

A week later the station-master called me on the 'phone. "Wire for you, Mr. MacKenzie," he said.

"Read it," said I, holding the receiver to my ear and at the same time out of the tail of my eye watching Jennie, who was present.

"It's this," came over the 'phone. "'J.'s purpose disclosed.' Signed 'Jennie.'"

"Thanks," said I.

"It sounds like a detective message," commented the operator.

"Thanks very much," said I, and hung up.

"Well, Jennie, what's it all about?"

"About fifty cents, I reckon. You told me to wire you." She came over and put her hands on my shoulders. "John's struck."

"Struck?" said I. "What about? Harry and Dick getting as much as he does?" I had never mentioned Harry's and Dick's kick to Jennie.

"He made a full confession," said Jennie.

"Confession?"

"He said it had been wearing on him for some time."

"What? His new importance?" said I.

"His new responsibility," said Jennie.

"What's the kick?" said I.

"He thinks it's not fair that Margaret should get as much as he does when she doesn't do anything but help me about the house."

"What the deuce—" I began, indignantly.

"Don't be impatient, Don. You don't understand the boy."

"Say, Jennie," said I, with another attempt at irony, "is there anything on the earth below or in the sky above or in the waters under the earth that I *do* understand? Is there anything you can't enlighten me on? When am I going to get over being taught, I'd like to know—informed, explained to?"

"Goosie, you're just as bad as John."

"Did you tell him you'd ask me about it?"

"He said he'd like it if I didn't mention it to you."

I was tickled at that. It let me out of the unpleasant job of having it out with him. John and I had always been chums, and I didn't want to strain the relations. But instead of letting Jennie know that I was relieved, I simply said, "Since you've taken it on your shoulders to decide such a question"—another attempt at irony—"pray what did you say to him?"

"I wouldn't try to be facetious if it hurts like that," said Jennie. She pinched my ear playfully. "Promise me you won't. Mother doesn't like to see you in pain."

"But what did you say to John?"

"I told him I thought he was right, so far

as he knew, but that I had some plans for Margaret that would surprise him and that if I didn't miss my guess, she would in a very short time be far more valuable than a mere household assistant." Jennie laughed. "I told him I was going to make a diplomat of her."

"Diplomat?" said I, my mind reverting to the Peace Conference. "What the deuce does a diplomat want around here if we ever expect to accomplish anything?"

"Perhaps I'd better call it business promoter," said Jennie.

I pondered a moment, then: "I don't get you. John's looking after that end of it."

"John's buying and selling, which requires judgment, yes. But that isn't big business."

"Big business on a farm? What the deuce?"

"Why not?"

"I suppose you're right, but I don't quite get you," said I.

"Don, years ago you and I realized that we could never make any money out of a small farm. So we increased our holding, didn't we?"

"Go on," said I.

"As your business grew, your ambitions grew, didn't they?"

I nodded.

"You wanted to expand, but there weren't

any other places near by. Your automobile has now made it possible for you to take on Jennings's place over near Oakville and look after it from day to day—and Brooks's down near Haviland Center, too."

"Yes, and I'll have 'em, you bet," said I; "that is, if they're as anxious to sell as they were three months ago. No need for those places to go begging now."

"Probably you'll have a dozen more before you get through."

"Probably."

"In that case, you'll be absent from home a great deal of the time. So will John. Harry and Dick have their work cut out for them. You'll depend more and more on Margaret and me."

"I don't see how I could depend on you any more than I have."

"John's kick was quite just," Jennie went on, after a pause. "But Margaret isn't to blame. She's ambitious; she wants to do her share; she's tired of running round at my heels. Dusting furniture and crocheting aren't enough. And I don't want her to do coarse work. It isn't necessary. Besides, a clever girl can be used to better advantage than making a kitchen drudge out of her. For Margaret *is* clever, you know."

"If she only had your good looks," I said.

"She has magnetism, which is worth more—and that's just exactly what I'm going to capitalize."

"Capitalize a girl's magnetism on a farm? You might do it in a store or a theater; but on a farm—"

Here Jennie cut in with: "As a farm grows bigger and bigger it becomes more and more a business proposition. The boss can't be at home all the time, so he often misses an important visitor. Catch on?"

I nodded non-committally.

"It's absolutely essential that the women are trained in the art of entertaining. A merchant in town may take a customer to the club, but the farmer must entertain him at his own house. Here's the psychology of it: You want to make some important transaction, say—land, cattle, fruit, machinery—either buying or selling. You have your man come to the house. It chances you're not at home. Let him be neglected by the women who devote their time entirely to the kitchen. Your man gets disgruntled; also the possibility of amiable discussion is reduced; he is less receptive to your view; he doesn't like the atmosphere; he gets blue, wants to go back to town or back home.

On the other hand, let your women folk be gracious, tactful, make him comfortable, happy, and he's apt to make concessions. He likes them; he likes your home; he likes you. If, in fact, you gain no immediate advantage, that man will remember you pleasantly. Apart from the pleasure of doing a civilized and courteous act, your wife or your daughter may be laying the foundation for some future advantage."

"Well?" said I.

"I'm going to make Margaret social directress of this business." At which I became enthusiastic, as I always did at Jennie's plans.

And so Margaret became social directress of the farm and amply justified Jennie's wisdom in creating her department. She was general understudy for both John and me, principally me. For she and I had long been great chums, and she was indeed more familiar with my method of handling a deal than were either of the boys. It was amazing how well posted she kept on market prices so as to manage John's customers when he should be absent.

But she shone principally as an entertainer. She had an exceedingly pleasing personality, magnetism; she was always carefully groomed; she had a low, pleasing voice; she was forever inventing attractive dishes, for her Shakespeare

had taught her the mollifying effect thereof on an obdurate customer; she selected her phonograph records with good judgment. Jennie had taught her, above all things, the value of repose. There was nothing discordant to her. One loved to have her about.

To show how Margaret's tact in handling customers developed, Griggs, the biggest grouch in all that part of the country, confessed to me: "You know, Don, I went over to your place to see you personally. I made up my mind if you weren't there to go right on to Henderson's and make the trade with him, for time was the essential. I just couldn't wait. But Margaret was so darned interesting that I just had to stay till you got back."

"How so?" said I, curious. "What did she do? Play a new record for you or treat you to some of those preserved plums?"

"Neither. She talked about that new baby of ours. She just seemed to know that I couldn't help bragging and couldn't stop. And she actually kept me going till you got back. Say, what the deuce does she care about our new baby? I guess you must have put her wise, didn't you, Don?"

"No," said I, quite honestly, "not especially. She's always wise about such things."

"I wonder why other farmers don't train their daughters that way?"

"They will when they discover it's good business, besides giving the girls pleasure."

"They soon will if they've got any sense. Everybody's talking about it. The word is: 'Go over to MacKenzie's farm. You'll never be disappointed. If Don isn't there, you'll find Jennie, and if Jennie's away, Margaret's there. One knows as much as the other, and they're always ready for business.'"

I could multiply the Griggs instance many times. I am confident that I'd have missed a great many who were impatient to be away if Margaret had not kept them there until my return.

Margaret, with all due affection for the boys, really was my right-hand man. The only trouble was that the fame of her cleverness spread abroad and attracted many young men to the house who were not bent wholly on commercial enterprise. I knew what was coming and dreaded it, in a way, but I affected to be shocked when Jennie told me that young Stephen W. Best, the son of a big tractor man, and Margaret were beginning to take each other very seriously. Two days later I was asked to answer the old and all-important question. I told

young Best I was willing if Jennie was, and let her settle it, which she did to the satisfaction of everybody concerned. But even so, I don't expect to get any discount on my next tractor. By heck! I wouldn't take it. I'd think I'd been selling my daughter if I did.

One day my eyes were opened and I said to Jennie: "Pinch me. Wake me up. I've been asleep."

"What's up?"

"You gave me to understand that you were training Margaret up just to be a valuable assistant to me, and I fell for it."

"But wasn't she?" said Jennie, chuckling.

"Of course she was," said I. "But you weren't looking out for the farm interests at all. You were looking out for her interests."

Jennie burst into peals of laughter. "Of course I was, Goosie. But didn't it help the farm, too?"

"Well," said I.

"But didn't it?" Jennie persisted.

And what could I say but "Yes"? So, you see, Jennie had me. That's the way she always beat me in an argument.

"Don't you like young Best?"

"Finest fellow in the world."

"What have you got to kick about, then?"

"Well," said I.

"But what have you got to kick about?" Jennie persisted.

"Oh, nothing," said I, gruffly. That's the way she beat me in the argument again.

But as to concrete results. Let me describe my farm as it is to-day. As hog production is the main thing with us, let us begin with that end of it. I was resolved not to get caught in another cholera epidemic; or, if unavoidably caught, to minimize the effect.

So we built our hog-houses of concrete throughout, and in such a way that they could be washed out with a hose and completely disinfected. Cleanliness, be it understood, is the one prime preventive and antidote for hog cholera. The pens are all of steel tubing. Also the troughs are of metal. This costs somewhat more than wood, but is vastly more sanitary. In case hog cholera should attack the herd I would have to burn nothing but the bedding. Whereas if built of wood, I'd have to clean out the whole structure.

Overhead, a carrier runs the entire length of the house, with pens on each side. Each pen is supplied with fresh water and there's a great concrete wallow out in the big yard. There are special pens to protect the little pigs so that

their mothers cannot lie on them. And there are hog-oilers where needed. There are self-feeders in the house, with big hoppers that need filling only occasionally.

The hog-house equipment is the combined effort of Dick and Harry.

The next department in order of importance is cows, including, of course, a member of the opposite sex. We usually milk about thirty cows. We sell the cream and feed the skim milk to the hogs. Some farmers claim they can raise good pigs without milk, but I can't. I always like to start the little pigs on milk.

Our cow-stables are fully equipped. We have steel stanchions and stalls. There are litter- and feed-carriers, both worth their weight in gold as labor-savers. The cork-brick flooring that we put in is not only sanitary, but more comfortable for the cattle to stand on. And, believe me, it pays to promote contentment among your live stock.

Our stock-watering system seems rather elaborate, but is simple enough once you're used to it. Before we put in our present apparatus we were obliged to drive the cattle out twice a day to drink from the outside tank. In winter the tank would freeze and there were days when we had to pump by hand, when the wind didn't

blow. Now we start the engine once a day and go away and leave it. When the tank is full the engine stops automatically. Every watering-trough is fitted with float valves. So we do not have to give a thought to watering the stock. They water themselves.

Most of the equipment was installed bit by bit during a period of years. The only ultra-modern appliances are the milking-machine and the watering-cups.

When we could get all the labor we needed at a reasonable price we milked by hand. But when we entered the war I realized that it would be necessary to do everything possible with machinery. The milking outfit cost me about $500, complete. But it saves the time of two extra men and is worth the price. The cow drinking-cups cost $3.50 each. There are thirty-two of them.

When I installed the drinking-cup system a neighbor, old Seth Timmons, the most prominent pessimist, calamity-howler, and all-round reactionary of that section, thus expressed his disapproval: "Drinking-cups for cows, eh? Well, I'll be damned! Next thing, I suppose, you'll be providin' 'em with napkins—not to say toothpicks."

"There's a psychology in our cork-floor,

drinking-cup business," I told Jennie; "a cow psychology. Make a cow easy in her mind and she'll 'let down' her milk.

"Once when father was alive," said I, "we had an unruly cow, but a good milk-giver. She got into the habit of holding up her milk, and after a while gave less. One day when she'd been herded in by Shep, and father was trying to milk her, she was very obstinate.

"An old, bushy-whiskered tramp came down the road and leaned over the fence, and after watching father's attempts for a few moments said, 'Let me handle that cow.'

"'Go ahead,' said father, 'if you think you can do it.'

"The tramp got a willow bough and made a brush of it. With this he gently stroked the cow's face and her back and brushed the tormenting flies away. It was amazing how quickly she was comforted and quieted, and presently gave down her milk without any restraint.

"'They're like human beings,' said the tramp. 'Make 'em comfortable; keep 'em good-natured.'"

Feeding the cattle is a simple matter. We have a mixing-room with spouts running from the feed-bins above. The herdsman simply

pulls up a couple of slides and lets down as much of each kind of ground feed as he requires, mixes it in the right proportions, loads it on the push-cart, and measures out what each animal ought to have. He makes but one trip of it all. The silage also is brought in by means of a carrier, so really the herdsman must make extra trips only for the hay and the bedding.

Next to the feed-room is the engine-room, with a gasolene-engine, set on a concrete foundation. The room is concrete lined to make it fire-proof, and the exhaust is piped to a concrete-lined exhaust put outside the foundations of the barn. The engine makes practically no noise. A belt running up through the ceiling drives a countershaft on the floor above, to which a feed-grinder, a corn-sheller, and a hay-hoister are belted.

Across an alley from the feed-room is the milk-room, which contains, among other things, the usual assortment of scales and milk-production sheets. We keep a record of each cow, even if we don't sell milk. For we deal in nothing but high-grade cows—can't afford to keep any but the very best for breeders. We have used a Babcock tester for years, and not only keep account of the pounds of milk each cow produces, but of the butter fat as well. Buyers go

over these records very carefully. That's where bookkeeping pays.

Another labor-saving device is a carrier, a single steel rod that cost very little, running from the milk-room near the house down to the stables. When we get through milking we load the pails, cans, and everything else on the carrier and shoot them up to the dairy-room. Another carrier takes the skim milk from the dairy-room to the hog-house. So, you see, no one has to break his back lugging milk, and no one has to make an extra trip.

Our dairy-room is equipped with a combined churn and butter-worker and a cream-separator, both of which are electrically driven by a one-quarter-horse-power motor mounted on a special stand. The floor is of concrete, with a bell trap in the middle leading to the sewer. There are hot- and cold-water faucets, besides a steam connection from the house heating-plant. During the seven months of the year that the furnace is in operation it supplies all the hot water required. For summer use there is an oil-heater to furnish hot water.

In this room we separate all our milk, make what butter we need for our own use, and sell the extra cream. A truck comes along every morning and picks up our cans of

cream, and we don't have any trouble about marketing.

When we are through milking, all the cans and pails are brought up on the carrier and are washed and cared for by the men who do the milking. The women have nothing at all to do with the dairy. In a big, built-in refrigerator that is filled with ice from the outside we cool the cream and keep our butter and eggs.

A word about our power equipment will show how interrelated are the duties of Harry and Dick, and how wise I was in putting these particular youngsters in charge of departments the operations of which so intimately dovetail into each other.

To begin with, the tractor is easily the big item of the power outfit. We have both a tractor and a tractor cultivator. Our tractor cultivator, operated by one man, will beat any team of horses. With it a single farm-hand can easily plow as many acres in a day as two men can plow with two teams of four or six horses each.

When father started farming it required a force of men to do the haying—oh, those baking days! It took one man almost two weeks to cut the hay with a scythe, let alone getting it into the barn. Also, one man alone could not

load, haul, and unload hay. It required two, usually three.

But with modern equipment one man can do as much as a dozen used to do. Yes, I'm conservative in saying that, on a level place like mine, one man can do as much as twenty did formerly. For instance, I can go out in the morning with my tractor, with two mowers attached, and in half a day cut fifteen acres of grass. In the afternoon I can hitch to my side-delivery rake and put it all up in windrows. The next morning, after the dew is off, I can begin hauling with my truck. I load with a hay-loader and unload at the barn with a hay-sling. We have a drum hoist, belted up to the countershaft, for operating the hay-hoist. We use a sling hoist, and with this we can take off a load of hay in just two minutes.

In brief, I can, all alone, harvest and store fifteen acres of hay in less than two days.

Having plowed and harvested, the tractor now attends to the commissary end of it. We have silos now, a method of putting up our feed our fathers knew nothing about. Think how long a time and how many men it would take to chop up those green cornstalks and hoist 'em into that great tub! But the tractor steps in. By means of a belt, we hitch it to the silage

cutter, and in two days have put up enough fodder to last our stock a year.

The charts we made last winter showed that power farming is, in still another respect, quite a bit more profitable than horse farming: It releases a big acreage for raising other food. We saved the produce of twenty-five acres last year by selling off eight horses. Just figure what that means, considering our crop yields. We used to keep ten to twelve big horses; now we keep only four—a kind of emergency power unit—and we shall dispose of them before next season, as it is quite clear that we shall never go back to animal power on this farm.

The busiest place for us in winter is our machine-shop. During the snow months we overhaul every implement. The result is that our machines and tools are always ready when work starts in the fields, and they seem never to wear out. The movement for annual-inspection week is a mighty good thing, but it is something we have always practised.

Our shop is in the form of a **T**, the head containing the repair shop and the combined well- and dairy-room, the lower part being used as a garage. We have a very complete outfit of power-driven machines and a full assortment of hand tools for working in either wood or metal.

There are a drill press, an engine lathe, several grinders, a couple of work-benches—one for carpenter work, the other for metal working—a blacksmith forge, and a series of racks for holding small tools, wrenches, and so on. Also, there's a bone-grinder for the poultry department and an air-pump for the milking-machine. We didn't want to run the big engine down at the barn, and we didn't feel like buying a new one, so we compromised by putting the air-pump up here. We always have to start from the dairy-room to do the milking, anyway, so it is no trouble to start the engine before we go.

A five-horse-power gasolene-engine furnishes the power. The main shaft runs clear through into the well-room, and from this all the machines in this room are driven.

At the end of the shop a door leads into the garage where I keep my automobile, my power truck, and my tractor. Just inside the garage door are the oil and gasolene pumps and meters —the most profitable devices I have. Just outside the building, buried, are my gasolene- and oil-tanks, holding 550 gallons and 100 gallons, respectively. This outfit cost about $325. But even at that, we couldn't afford to be without it.

You see, we have an automobile, a truck, a tractor, a lighting-plant, an engine in the barn,

a shop engine, a spraying outfit, a tractor cultivator, and a small garden tractor, so we must have a good storage system.

By buying in large quantities we get our gasolene two or three cents cheaper, and make even a greater saving on oil. The gasolene is all filtered and there is no possibility of wasting any in filling the tanks.

I have several thousand dollars tied up here just in motors. If we count in the automobile and all these other engines, exclusive of the electric-lighting plant, they amount to just about $6,000. The automobile cost me, new, three years ago, $1,500; the tractor cost $1,250; the tractor cultivator, $500; the truck, $1,500; and the engine in the barn, $350. But remember, as I said before, these power units increase our acreage quite materially.

We put our lighting system in last year and we think we have something pretty fine. Jennie is delighted with it, because it gives her power for all sorts of kitchen power devices. This little plant cost us $475, laid down at our railway station, and is worth every cent of it.

The cost of the house fixtures was rather high—$200—but we wanted the place fixed up to correspond with the rest of the furnishings. The wiring of the house and all the rest of the

buildings and grounds, including switches, wires, poles, lamps, and labor, amounted to $375, making a total of $1,050. We paid $50 for a motor to run the cream-separator and churn, so our total expense ran to $1,100.

To fit up a shop like mine at present prices would cost:

An 11-foot engine lathe	$140.00
A 100-pound steel anvil	25.00
Vise	7.00
Forge and blower	50.00
Post drill	25.00
Blacksmith's tools	25.00
Carpenter's tools	40.00
Five-horse-power engine	200.00
Shafting and hangers	50.00
Benches	25.00
Total	$587.00

In our machinery-shed are a husker-shredder and a small threshing-machine, for we do our own threshing.

We have a nice little spraying outfit that fits on the back of a truck; it cost $300.

We are very proud of our water system, which consists of a pump belted to the main shaft, and which supplies both the barn and the house with water, quite as well as would an electric-driven automatic pump. When we

SUCH IS MY FARM TO-DAY AS COMPARED WITH THE SAME FARM TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

built the house we carried the basement excavation out under the rear porch to provide room for a pressure tank of ample dimensions. Figuring on the basis of 50 gallons of water for each person, 10 gallons for each horse and cow, and 2 gallons for each hog, we found our daily requirements ran anywhere from 1,000 to 1,500 gallons a day. We concluded we could get along very well with a 1,700-gallon tank, and that is what we installed.

We usually start the pump in the morning and go away and leave it. There is an automatic stop, operated by the pressure in the tank, that will shut off the engine when the tank is full. At noontime, if the water shows a little low in the gauge, we start the engine again.

I don't know that I can give you the exact figures as to what it would cost to duplicate this plant to-day, but I can at least give you a fair idea. Take the tank as the first item. The present price of a 48-inch tank, 18 feet long, is $467. With the necessary valves and gauges, it will amount to about $500. Our well is 90 feet deep, and it is 90 feet to water, so we had to put in a deep-well pump. The present price of the pump, which is capable of throwing 750 gallons an hour, is $158.

Black inch-and-a-quarter pipe is worth just

a fraction more than 14 cents a foot. Fittings and valves come extra, and then there are the costs of installation, of excavating and filling trenches. We have altogether about 500 feet of water-main, of which about 100 feet is one-inch pipe. There are about 350 feet of excavating and filling, which is worth, the way we did it with our own men, about $50. Altogether, I should say it would cost at least $1,000 to duplicate this plant, and possibly a little more. It would depend largely upon how much work you could do with your own men.

We have a big cistern and a double connection to the pump, so we can pump soft water into a small pressure tank in the basement. That completes our water system. Before this was installed we had a windmill and an overhead tank, but it was never very satisfactory and it gave us very inadequate fire protection.

Our water system was installed six years ago and has given us excellent service. But if I were putting in a water-supply plant today, I should look into the merits of the electric-driven pumping units. They do not require so large a tank and I think it would be a little cheaper.

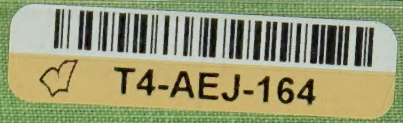
Mechanical power, when one figures the cost of everything, is the cheapest power there is.

The principle operates just as it does in manufacturing.

As the universal steam-engine revolutionized the trades, so will the gas-engine revolutionize farming when the manufacturers begin to make good farm implements to be operated by power.

Such is my farm to-day as compared with the same farm twenty-five years ago—a few ill-arranged buildings, a stubborn soil, and a mortgage. To-day I am a rich man. How was it done? You will say by keeping the boys at home, by letting them specialize according to their bents. But I say it was Jennie. That's what I got through making my wife my partner.

THE END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